



PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore County Charter requires that a master plan be adopted or updated every ten years. The purpose of the master plan is to guide the development of the county. A master plan envisions a desirable future, and charts a course of action. *Master Plan 2010* examines the policies and strategies that have guided past development of the county, and reassesses them in light of present and projected conditions.

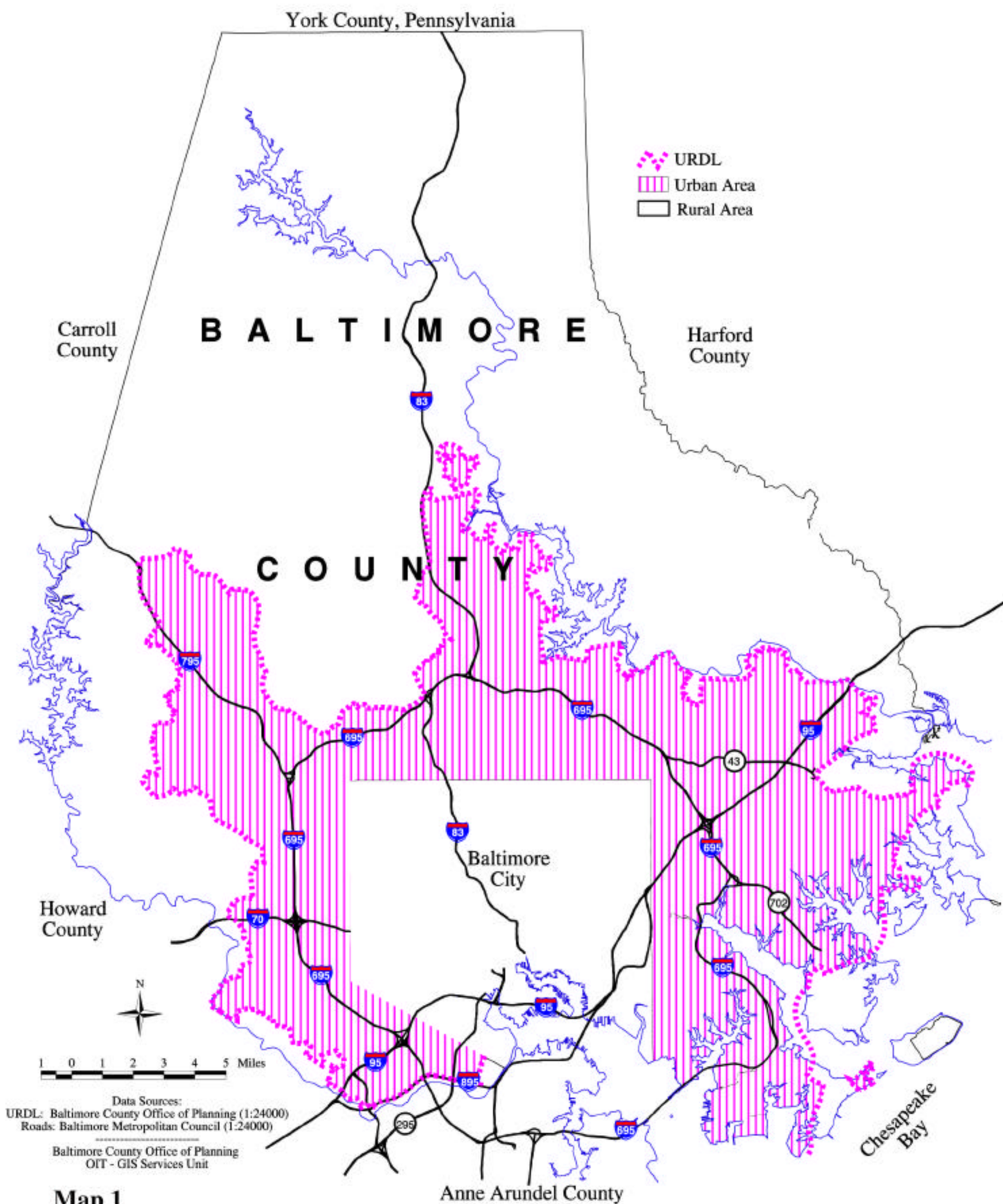
PRIOR PLANNING

Each successive master plan adopted by Baltimore County has built upon previous work. Central to the way that the county has developed is the concept of delineating two distinct land management areas — the urban area and the rural area. This concept manages growth in a manner that preserves important natural and agricultural resources and maximizes the efficiency of county revenues spent on transportation improvements, utilities, and other capital projects. An urban rural demarcation line (URDL) was established in 1967 (Map 1). The urban areas of the county were those that had or would receive public water and sewer infrastructure, and therefore would accommodate development, including employment, retail, and residential uses. In the rural areas, reliance on private well and septic systems would limit the amount of development that could be accommodated, and thereby help ensure the area's continued use for agricultural and natural resource protection and low density rural residential uses.

The 1972 master plan (titled *1980 Guideplan for Baltimore County, Maryland*) was the first formal master plan adopted by the county. Between 1960 and 1970, the county's population grew from 492,428 to 621,077. The plan projected that by 1980 the population would increase to 740,000. Its philosophy was to accommodate growth and development in an orderly, environmentally sensitive manner with adequate open space.

The *Baltimore County Comprehensive Plan, 1975* and the *Baltimore County, Master Plan 1979-1990* reorganized land use and development planning into a comprehensive growth management program. These plans created the current land use framework. Their philosophy was to modify the county's land use policy to reduce inefficient low density suburban

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Map 1
Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL)

development. The 1975 plan established urban and rural zoning. Two growth areas — Owings Mills and Perry Hall-White Marsh — were created by the 1979 plan. Future development was to be directed to these areas, thereby preserving agriculture and watershed land in other areas of the county.



The *Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000* created specific management areas and policies that included growth areas, urban centers, community conservation areas, employment areas, and several kinds of rural management areas. Community conservation areas consisted of the county's established residential and commercial areas. Within the urban areas, the policies balanced county efforts between growth areas and community conservation areas, with an overall philosophy of enhancing the quality of development. In the rural areas, policies reaffirmed the county's commitment to agricultural and natural resource protection, while providing some areas for low density rural residential growth.

MASTER PLAN 2010

As the twentieth century draws to a close, Baltimore County is facing challenges and opportunities unique in its history. The growth management policies launched with the creation of the URDL have been refined over the years and are now in their final phases of implementation. Baltimore County continues to evolve and change, and as such must identify and address the land use challenges of the next decade with greater sophistication. Preserving and enhancing the quality of life is a priority for the entire county.

Traditionally, master plans only address issues directly related to land use. In fact, this is the role of the master plan as envisioned by the framers of the County Charter. The plan is intended to serve as a reference document which the County Council may use when exercising its authority to establish land use policy through the adoption of zoning maps and zoning ordinances. However, traditional master plan issues – those which directly affect the use of the county's land, such as transportation, zoning, and recreation – have changed substantially. A more comprehensive approach, one which addresses issues that go beyond zoning, but nevertheless affect land use, is helpful.

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Master Plan 2010 adopts this approach by recognizing the interdependence of traditional land use issues with nontraditional master plan topics such as education, public safety, social services, economic development, and community stewardship. However, discussion of these nontraditional issues in this master plan is intended only as additional guidance for the County Council when it acts to establish land use policy.

The urban portion of Baltimore County is not unlike many maturing areas in the United States whose growth took place in the immediate post-World War II building boom. Buildings, facilities, and infrastructure in most of the communities adjacent to the Baltimore County-Baltimore City Line are 50 years old. Infrastructure in these areas is also reaching the end of its “life expectancy” and is in need of repair or replacement. Much has been done to address these needs over the past decade, and *Master Plan 2010* recognizes that Baltimore County’s sustained prosperity will require continued significant reinvestment in its urban areas.

Baltimore County has more than a twenty-year history of implementing many of the concepts of the Smart Growth program. Within the URDL, traditional growth is slowing as the designated growth areas and remaining infill sites become fully developed. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that future development inside the URDL will conserve and enhance existing communities and businesses, while providing needed services and housing. The future development of the county’s urban areas must provide a balance between the built environment and the provision or redevelopment of passive and active open space and other amenities.

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Reflecting national trends, shifts are occurring in the composition of Baltimore County’s population. The percentage of senior citizens living in the county doubled between 1970 and 1997; another 0.6 percent increase is projected from 2000 through 2010. To accommodate the county’s senior population, a wide range of alternative housing and transportation options is being considered to address their unique needs.

Multi-family housing and the communities where they are located are another major challenge being faced by the county. Multi-family housing represents slightly less than one quarter of the county’s housing stock, while representing a good percentage of its affordable housing stock. Most low to moderate income residents are concentrated within 16% of all county census tracts.

Baltimore County will continue to explore methods of bringing needed services to these communities, particularly social services, educational remediation, adult basic education, preventive health services, and recreation. Efforts and resources must also continue to be focused on communities adjacent to multi-family housing in order to protect property values and stabilize community institutions.



Aggressive economic development initiatives that generate and retain family supporting jobs will be required. Measures will need to be undertaken to preserve an adequate supply of land for job creation, develop a trained and skilled workforce, and revitalize our aging commercial centers. Maintaining a healthy, strong tax base will ensure that adequate jobs and services are provided to county residents.

Baltimore County's rural areas continue to face development pressure. While approximately 30,000 acres of land have been preserved for agricultural use, the goal of preserving 80,000 acres is still being threatened by traditional suburban development. *Master Plan 2010* explores new concepts for achieving preservation goals, protecting natural resources, and maintaining rural character. Within the rural area, innovative mechanisms to ensure the protection of the county's agriculture industry and sensitive environmental areas are required; a rural strategy that goes beyond zoning (utilizing mechanisms such as land trusts and easements) needs to be considered. The rural area will not receive the same level of services and infrastructure as the urban area. The use of development rights purchases to compensate property owners for the loss of density should be investigated. A pattern of development that blends in with the rural area also needs to be developed.

Master Plan 2010 continues to endorse Baltimore County's previous growth management policies, and the document has been designed to emphasize the county's urban-rural distinctions while still recognizing its cohesiveness. Urban and rural land uses reinforce each other. By preserving the rural areas, rather than permitting continued sprawl, the county can commit its fiscal resources to the improvement of its urban areas. The knowledge that resources will be directed to existing urban neighborhoods should bolster county residents' confidence in the continued viability of their communities.



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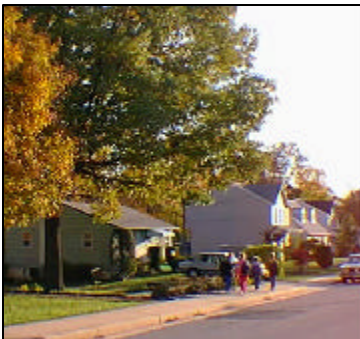


In sum, while the county is strong and thriving, *Master Plan 2010* also recognizes the need to address the opportunities presented by a maturing county, opportunities to ensure that the entire county continues to function as a community that provides high quality living standards and opportunities for its diverse citizenry.

The orderly development of the Baltimore County community is not a static process. It is subject to the social and economic changes which will naturally occur during the ten-year life of the master plan. The policy decisions of the County Council, which are expressed through its law-making power, are the means to address the county's evolving needs. The statements of *Master Plan 2010* are intended to guide the Council in this role.

Public safety, education, economic development, community conservation, rural preservation, the natural environment, recreation and parks, historic preservation, equal opportunity, and community stewardship are all intertwined in making communities, and thus the county, successful. Among the goals of the county are:

- **Continue to protect citizens from crime in their homes and communities.** Crime prevention, sophisticated computer and mapping resources for crime analysis and investigation, inter-jurisdictional cooperation, and community-based policing are measures that help reduce crime and provide a safe environment.
- **Continue to make the quality of public education a top priority.** A well-rounded education is essential for meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing society, and good schools are tremendously important to sustaining viable communities.
- **Develop and retain a skilled work force.** Computerization and telecommunications are changing the nature of employment, creating a strong demand for workers who are both technically skilled and adaptable.
- **Ensure an adequate supply of jobs providing family-supporting wages** by addressing the critical needs of employers. These needs include an adequate supply of properly zoned, utility-served land.
- **Preserve the county's significant investment in its established communities** by reinvesting resources to maintain all aspects of community life. Conserve and enhance the character of the county's established residential neighborhoods and improve the housing stock. Protecting the county's rural resources will aid this effort by curtailing new infrastructure expenditures.



The county will conserve and enhance the character of the county's established residential neighborhoods and improve the housing stock.



- **Maintain the URDL** and enact stronger measures for preserving rural land uses, retaining the agriculture industry, and protecting the county's natural resources.
- **Ensure that new development and redevelopment is of high quality and compatible** with its surroundings.
- **Continue to recognize citizens** in need of assistance and improve their ability to access county services and gain self-sufficiency.
- **Ensure that all residents have access to opportunities** that increase their employability in jobs that provide family supporting wages and provide accessible transportation opportunities to employment centers.
- **Continue to safeguard environmental resources**, particularly in watershed areas.
- **Provide quality parks and recreation opportunities** for all citizens.
- **Promote the identification, protection, and restoration of historic resources.**
- **Encourage community stewardship and personal responsibility** as key components of a smoothly functioning community.
- **Continue public-private partnerships** to meet county goals.

THE MASTER PLAN 2010 PROCESS

On January 23, 1997, the Office of Planning held a kick-off meeting for the county's master plan process. Over 160 community, government, and business representatives attended the presentation. Staff presented the work schedule, the function of the advisory groups to be formed, and some of the master plan issues facing the county:

- managing regional and local growth;
- maintaining and stabilizing residential neighborhoods;
- redeveloping commercial and industrial sites;
- completing infrastructure requirements in the growth areas;
- maintaining compliance with Smart Growth and related state mandates; and
- strengthening and improving schools with regard to physical plant and curriculum to attract/maintain homeowners.

During the spring of 1997, ten advisory groups of interested citizens were formed. Their purpose was to discuss and debate specified subjects to ascertain the issues that needed to be addressed and to formulate specific proposed actions. These groups focused on the following areas: commercial



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corridors, community conservation, employment centers/growth areas, rural areas, transportation, historic preservation, waterfront, Owings Mills, Perry Hall-White Marsh, and Towson. During the summer of 1997, planning staff prepared the *Master Plan 2010 Town Meeting Discussion Paper*. This paper proposed the philosophy, ideas, and general direction of the master plan resulting from advisory group and county agency recommendations. A series of town meetings were held in each of the seven council districts during the month of October. The town meetings were an opportunity for the public to comment on the direction the master plan was taking and to bring forth ideas and concerns. *Draft Master Plan 2010* was prepared and distributed for public review in October 1998. The draft plan was the subject of a public hearing by the Baltimore County Planning Board at which public comment was offered for the Board's consideration. In October of 1999, the Planning Board submitted the plan to the County Council for its review. The County Council held a public hearing on the plan on November 9, 1999.

The master plan is traditionally updated every four years, before the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP). This timing helps to ensure that the master plan remains a “living document,” relevant and valid as a guide to development in the county and responsive to the concerns and wishes of its citizens.

THE ROLE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The County Executive and the County Council have recognized the master plan as an important advisory tool for ensuring that the growth of Baltimore County is managed in an orderly and rational manner. Many of the activities of government encourage conformance with the master plan, such as the capital improvement program, the water and sewer master plan, and the various zoning map processes.

Maryland law requires, under Article 66B, Section 7.03, that certain elements and visions be included in the master plan. Those elements are listed in Article 66B, Section 3.05(a) and (b) and Section 3.06(b). State law requires that county plans implement and establish policies based on the following “Seven Visions”:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
2. Sensitive areas are protected.

Town meetings provided an opportunity for the public to comment on the direction of the master plan and to bring forth ideas and concerns.

3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.
6. To assure the achievement of one through five above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.



This master plan includes those required elements and visions, and it serves to provide goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards that are a guide for the development of Baltimore County.

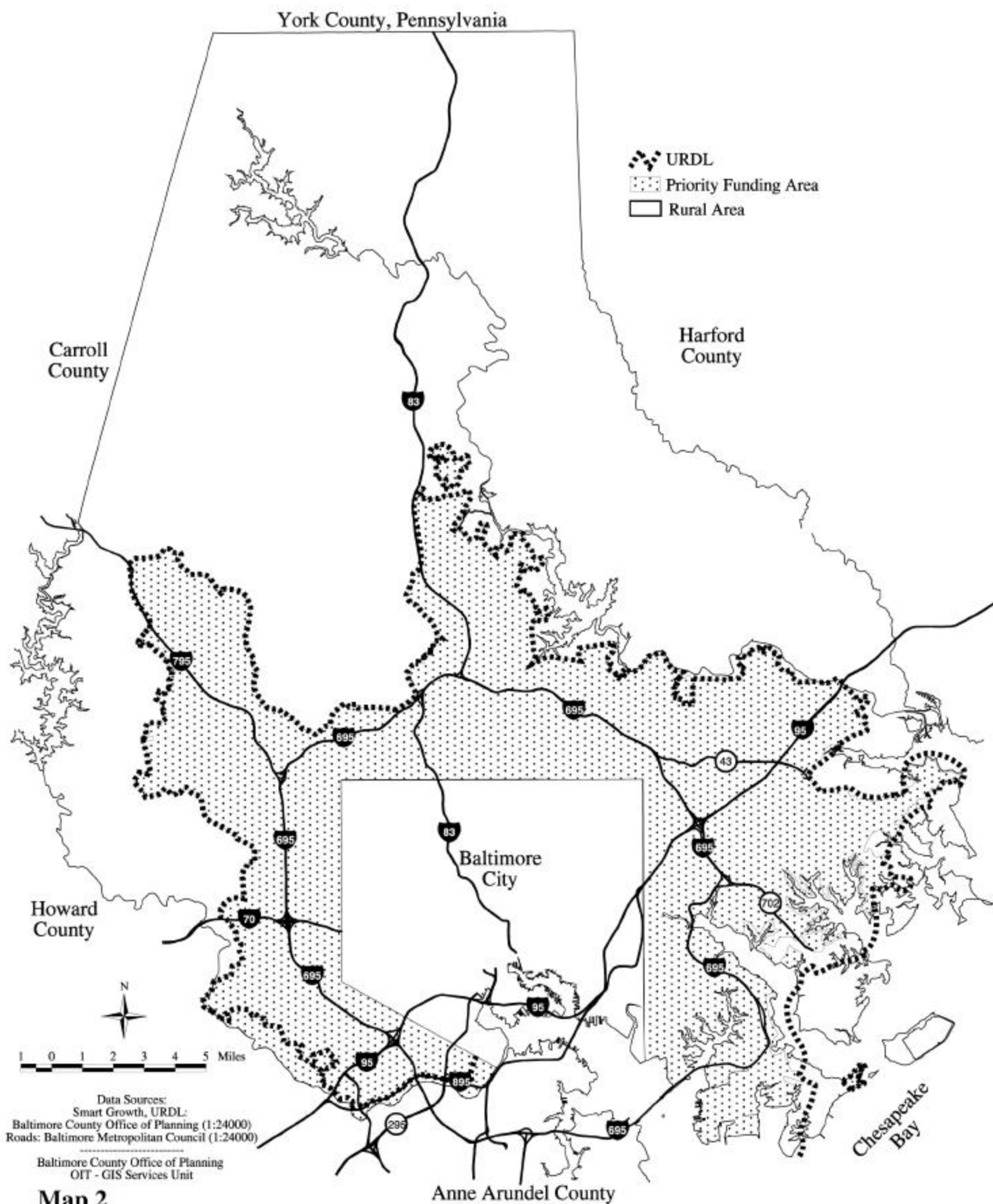
The master plan also provides guidance in the development of community plans. Over the last ten years, 26 community plans and development strategies have been adopted as amendments to the current master plan. They serve as supplements and additions, making detailed recommendations for individual communities. *Master Plan 2010* provides recommendations for additional community plans to be undertaken in the next ten years.

An important part of the county's land use regulations is zoning. It consists of the regulatory text, known as *the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations*, and the "Baltimore County Zoning Map." Amending the zoning text or map can change zoning. All zoning text changes and most zoning map changes are made through the adoption of a County Council ordinance. While text amendments are initiated from time to time as deemed necessary, the zoning map is most often amended through the formal CZMP, which occurs at regular four-year intervals. During the tenure of *Master Plan 2010*, Baltimore County will conduct a CZMP in the years 2000, 2004, and 2008. The zoning text and map always take legal precedence over master plan recommendations, guidelines, and maps.

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SMART GROWTH

In 1997, additional state legislation enacted the Smart Growth and the Rural Legacy programs and established priorities for state spending in an effort to preserve existing neighborhoods as well as agricultural, natural, and rural resources. Baltimore County's established planning policies, which *Master Plan 2010* continues to endorse, are consistent with Smart Growth initiatives. Statewide Smart Growth initiatives will augment the county's



Map 2 Smart Growth

efforts to enhance the local economy, conserve established communities, and preserve rural areas. The designation of Priority Funding Areas provides an opportunity for the state and Baltimore County jointly to encourage and support economic growth and community conservation. The Rural Legacy Program will assist the county in its efforts to preserve agricultural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources, and provide opportunities to acquire parkland. Pursuant to the 1997 state law, Baltimore County has identified its Priority Funding Areas (Map 2). These areas fall within the URDL and as such either receive or are planned to receive water and sewer service. The county's rural preservation program areas are shown on Map 36.

